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Alabama Development Office

We Want Your Input!

This edition of *Developing Alabama* marks a new format for the publication. We would like to include more “news use can use” related to economic development for our communities as well as encourage our businesses and community representatives to e-mail news of interest for upcoming publications. If you have an event for our upcoming calendar, a new program, an industry in your community that manufactures a unique product, an economic development news tip or you would like to write a guest column, e-mail Gerri Miller at millerg@ado.state.al.us and we will make every effort to help you market your community.

Alabama Communities of Excellence Adds Communities

The Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) Program is a model of how the state’s organizations can work together in a common effort. The program benefits the cities involved and also creates new standards of excellence to which all communities may strive.

As of March 2005, five new communities have been selected to participate in the ACE program. These communities are Atmore, Fayette, Gulf Shores, Millbrook and Thomasville. Each of these communities is expected to begin working toward ACE certification within the next few weeks.

Alabama has many organizations that provide assistance in the areas of community and economic development. After years of planning, the ACE organization was created in 2002 as a non-profit corporation, organized to utilize the collective expertise of its partner organizations to assist Alabama’s smaller communities.

The partnership includes representatives from the Alabama Association of Regional Councils, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, ADO, Alabama Gas Corp., Alabama Historical Commission, Alabama Municipal Electric Authority, Alabama Power Co., Alabama Southern Rural Access Program, Auburn University’s Economic Development Institute, Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama, Tennessee Valley Authority, University of Alabama’s University Center for Economic Development, United States Department of Agriculture — Rural Development, Regions Financial Corp., Auburn University’s Truman Pierce Institute and the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries.

These organizations represent a unique and powerful partnership that has the expertise, public and private resources and commitment to help address many community needs.



Alabama Tries Joint Approach To Marketing State

Alabama and Mississippi have agreed to begin co-marketing sites along their border. Alabama Development Office Director Neal Wade said Alabama is interested in this approach because to date, much of the state’s growth has focused along Interstate 65.

The state wants to widen the playing field and bring more communities into economic development projects.



Neal Wade

“For us, that means focusing on areas that are mostly rural,” Wade said.

The arrangement allows the states to share both the costs and benefits of putting a project proposal together. Wade notes, however, that additional benefits come when a large company locates at one of these sites because it will most likely bring suppliers with it. “Our small communities in these rural areas, on both sides of the border, will be able to compete for suppliers,” he said. “And, we believe new jobs can be created in these areas.”

Trade Forum Planned

ANNISTON -- “Creating Jobs with Trade” will be the topic of a trade leadership forum to be held on March 16th at the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce. The program is designed for political leader and business executives to learn and discuss how jobs can be created for the community through international trade. There is no charge to attend. For more information, contact Hilda Lockhart at 334-242-0442.

Film Industry Benefits State in 2004

MONTGOMERY -- Alabama is becoming a viable location for the movie industry with film and media projects produced in the state bringing in \$18,672,500 in direct benefits to local and state governments in 2004 alone.

With the inclusion of multipliers or "the ripple effect" on other area businesses, the impact on Alabama's economy could be close to \$50 million.

Projects produced in the state included feature films such as "Constellation" and "Heavens Fall." Television segments were produced as well as commercials, documentaries and foreign television, music videos, short films, student films, corporate and industrial training films, public service announcements, print photographs for a car advertisement, and building and set construction.

"The costs of doing business in the traditional film centers such as California and New York have become more and more prohibitive and filmmakers in America are searching for more effective ways of doing business," said ADO Director Neal Wade. "With its beautiful beaches, both rural and urban settings and the mountains of North Alabama, Alabama is a state of varied landscapes within driving distance of one another. Combine this geographic diversity with the state's low cost of doing business and you have an ideal site for a film project."



Heavens Fall was filmed in Alabama in 2004.

Cullman Receives Achievement Award

MONTGOMERY – Cullman County has been selected as the recipient of Alabama's first Economic Development Achievement Award for the area's 2004 economic development efforts.

The Alabama Development Office presented the award to Cullman County during the Alabama Manufacturer of the Year Awards ceremony at the RSA Alabama Activity center in Montgomery.

Cullman County was recognized for attracting the most new and expanding industries in the state. In 2004, the county announced 83 new and expanding companies, 960 new jobs and a combined capital investment of \$152,729,347.

Dale Greer of the development committee said he thinks the award reflects the hard work of his office, but also reflects well on the county. "I think it really is a compliment to the entire office," he said. "But industry recruitment and retention reflects on many things. It really speaks to the whole community."

Cullman was also recently ranked third in the nation by Site Selection magazine in its "Top Small Town Awards." In 2000, the city ranked 34th in the study. The article will be released in the magazine's March issue.

The Alabama Manufacturer of the Year Awards were presented by the Alabama Technology Network and the Business Council of Alabama. The awards ceremony was sponsored by ADO, the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama and the Alabama Electric Cooperative Inc.

Business Incubators Good Year Adds To Area's Economic Health

BIRMINGHAM -- Tenants and recent graduates of the Entrepreneurial Center and UAB's Office for the Advancement of Developing Industries played a role in 1,668 jobs in the area. Companies tied to the two incubators generated \$188.2 million in sales, investment and grants in 2004.

The incubators last year had an estimated economic impact of \$377 million, reflecting a ripple effect as employees make purchases and companies pay for goods and services, according to a report released by the companies.

2004 Good Year for Alabama

Alabama had an excellent year in 2004 for economic development with 571 projects announced representing 24,294 new jobs. These companies invested \$2,746,750,461 into our state's economy.

"This economy, one that was weak and bleeding jobs just two years ago, is now recognized as one of the strongest in America," according to Gov. Bob Riley.

A study recently released by the Washington-based Corporation for Enterprise Development ranked Alabama in the Top 10 out of all 50 states in a variety of economic indicators.

"We ranked fourth in employment growth, fourth in average annual pay growth and first in the variety of industry located in our state," Gov. Riley said.

Mayor's Group Kicks Off

LIVINGSTON -- The first in what is expected to be a regular gathering of regional mayors was held at the University of West Alabama recently.

ADO Assistant Director Anita Archie addressed the group and conveyed the support of ADO for the region. She noted the work of the Governor's Black Belt Commission and its efforts to spark tangible development in west Alabama.

She also encouraged participants to develop relationships with ADO's project managers.